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Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
HA-05 TRSE-00 EB-08 /081 W
----------117558 302356Z /23
P R 302155Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5166
INFO AMEMBASS CARACAS
AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SANTO DOMINGO 3599

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, DR
SUBJECT: ELECTION RESULTS CONTINUE TO HANG FIRE

1. ANOTHER WEEK HAS DRAGGED BY WITHOUT THE CENTRAL ELECTORAL BOARD (JCE) HAVING DECIDED OFFICIALLY WHO WON THE MAY 16 ELECTIONS. INSTEAD THE JCE ALLOWED ITS FORMAL HEARINGS TO DETERIORATE INTO A SPECTACLE DOMINATED BY POLITICOS FROM PRO-BALAGUER MINI-PARTIES, NONE OF WHICH COULD EVEN ELECT A CITY COUNCILMAN IN THE WHOLE REPUBLIC. AT TIMES THE DILATORY ANTICS OF SOME OF THE MINI-PARTY "LEADERS" SEEMED EVEN TO ANNOY THE REFORMISTAS WHO AGREED WITH THE PRD IN REJECTING SOME OF THEIR DEMANDS. SOME REFORMISTAS ALSO WERE MAKING STATEMENTS CALLING FOR A RAPID END TO THE JCE HEARINGS.

2. AT WEEK'S END, THE ESSENTIAL ARGUMENTS REMAINED AS THEY HAVE BEEN FOR THE PAST 45 DAYS: THE GOVERNMENT'S PARTIDO REFORMISTA (PR) AND THE MINI-PARTIES ARE DEMANDING, IN EFFECT, A RERUN OF THE MAY 16 ELECTION THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY ALLEGING THAT THROUGH COMPUTER TRICKERY 600,000 REGISTERED VOTERS WERE UNABLE TO VOTE, WHILE THE PRD ARGUES THAT IT WON A FAIR AND CLEAN ELECTION AND
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THAT THE REFORMISTAS HAVE NOT PRODUCED A SHRED OF EVIDENCE TO PROVE THE CONTRARY.

3. THE JCE HAS KEPT ITS COUNSEL, RULING ONLY THAT "IN THE SHORTEST POSSIBLE TIME" IT WILL DECLARE IN ONE SINGLE DECISION ALL THE RESULTS IN THE COUNTRY'S 84 VOTING DISTRICTS WHERE THEY HAVE BEEN CHALLENGED. JCE CHAIRMAN

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VARGAS SUBERVI SAID LAST WEEK THAT HE EXPECTS THE DECISIO
TO COME BY SOMETIME NEXT WEEK; HOWEVER, THERE HAVE BEEN
SUBSEQUENT INDICATIONS THE BOARD MAY STRETCH THINGS OUT BEYOND
THAT TIME.

4. WHILE THE ARGUMENTS ARE REPEATED DAY IN AND DAY OUT
AT THE JCE (APPEALS HAVE BEEN HEARD FROM 54 DISTRICTS
WHILE SEVERAL MORE REMAIN TO BE HEARD), THE COUNTRY
IMPATIENTLY AWAITS THE FINAL DECISION. WE CONTINUE TO
SEE THE PHENOMENON OF PUBLIC DEMANDS "THAT THE POPULAR
WILL BE REPSECTED"--I.E., THAT THE PRD BE ALLOWED TO
TAKE OFFICE--BUT IT IS NOT AS INTENSE AS IN THE EARLY
DAYS OF THE JCE'S CONSIDERATION OF THE CHALLANGE. INDEED
THE HARDEST PRESSURE THE BOARD FEELS CONTINUES TO COME FROM
THE NATION'S NEWSPAPERS (WITH THE NOTABLE EXCEPTION
OF EL CARIBE) AND, POLITICALLY MORE INTERESTING, FROM
THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

5. THE DOMINICAN EPISCOPATE OF THE CHURCH, LED BY
CARDINAL OCTABIO ANTONIO BERAS ROJAS, CANCELED ITS PLANNED
VISIT TO ROME TO CELEBRATE POPE PAUL'S 15TH
ANNIVERSARY. BECAUSE OF THE ELECTORAL UNCERTAINTY,
BERAS SAID, HE AND THE 11 DOMINICAN BISHOPS DECIDED TO
STAY HERE "TO SHARE THE ANGUISH OF OUR FAITHFUL WHO
DESIRE THE PRESENCE OF THEIR PASTORS IN THIS HOUR OF
CONFLICT."
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6. BERAS' STATEMENT ACTUALLY IS THE MILDEST FROM
DOMINICAN CHURCH LEADERS TO APPEAR TO DATE; THE CARDINAL
HAS LONG BEEN SEEN AS CLOSE TO PRESIDENT BALAGUER.
BUT THERE IS STRONG ANTI-GOVERNMENT SENTIMENT AMONG
THE NATION'S BISHOPS; AT LEAST ONE HAS WARNED OF
REVOLUSTION IF THE PRD IS DENIED POWER. OTHERS HAVE CALLED
ON BALAGUER, THE GOVERNMENT AND THE ARMED FORCES TO
RECOGNIZE THE VALIDIITY OF THE ELECTION OF ANTONIO
GUZMAN AND ACCEPT THE INEVITABLE. ENCOURAGED BY THE
PRELATES, THE LAITY IS SPEAKING OUT, AS DID THE
DOMINICAN CONFERENCE OF THE RELIGIOUS, DEMANDING OFFICIAL
OBSERVANCE OF THE ELECTORAL WILL THAT WAS EXERCISED MAY
16. ALL OF THESE EFFORTS WERE HELPED ALONG BY THE
MEETING HERE THIS WEEK OF BISHOPS FROM THE CARIBBEAN
REGION TO HELP PREPARE FOR THE THIRD GENERAL CONFERENCE
OF THE LATIN AMERICAN APISCOPATE (CELAM). CELAM
PRESIDENT, BRAZILIAN CARDINAL ALOISIO LORSCHEIDER TOLD
A PRESS CONFERENCE THAT, AS A GENERAL PRINCIPLE, THE
CHURCH SUPPORTS RESPECT FOR THE POPULAR WILL EXPRESSED
IN DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS. SAYING HE WAS NOT ADDRESSING
HIMSELF SPECIFICALLY TO THE DOMINICAN SITUATION, ABOUT

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WHICH HE LACKED FACTS, THE CARINAL SAID THIS POSITION
NOT ONLY REFLECTS A PRINCIPLE OF ETHICS BUT ONE OF
CHRISTIAN MORALITY.

7. THE PAPAL NUNCIO, THOUGH HE HAS NOT SPOKEN PUBLICLY,
HAS REPEATEDLY EXPRESSED TO AMBASSADOR YOST SERIOUS
CONCERN ABOUT THE POSSIBLE VIOLENT EFFECTS OF A CONTINUED
EFFORT BY RECALCITANT REFORMISTAS TO THWART THE ELECTION.
HIS VIEWS REFLECT THOSE OF THE HIERARCHY TO SOME DEGREE,
ESPECIALLY THOSE OF THE RURAL PRIESTS AND THESE VIEWS APPEAR IN
TURN TO HAVE INFLUENCED THE DECISIONS OF THE BISHOPS TO PLAY
A MORE ACTIVE ROLE.

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
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----------117802 302354Z /23
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SANTO DOMINGO 3599

8. ANY "LONG-RANGE PLAN" ON THE PART OF REFORMISTA
SCHEMERS TO HANSTRING OR UNSEAT A PRD GOVERNMENT WAS
DENOUNCED YESTERDAY BY PRD SECGEN PENA GOMEZ, WHO SAID THE
OBJECTIVE OF THE CONSPIRACY IS TO GET THE JCE TO ORDER
NEW ELECTIOS II FIVE RURAL PROVINCES THAT WOULD VOUCHSAFE
THE REFORMISTAS' CONTROL OF THE NEXT SENATE. THAT
SENATE, WHICH APPOINTS ALL JUDGES, COULD NAME THE
HEAD OF THE SUPREME COURT, WHO WOULD BE NEXT IN LINE
TO SUCCEED TO THE PRESIDENCY SHOULD GUZMAN AND VICE PRESIDENT
MAJLUTA BE "CONSTITUTIONALLY" REMOVED FROM OFFICE.

9. CONCERN THAT SOME SUCH SKULDUGGERY MAY BE AFOOT
HAS NEVER BEEN FAR BELOW THE SURFACE OF POPULAR OPINION,
ESPECIALLY AS THE REFORMISTAS HAVE PERSISTED IN THEIR
EFFORTS NOTWITHSTANDING THE BOOMERANG EFFECT OF THEIR
PREVIOUS MANEUVERS. THIS WEEK WITNESSED TWO NEW STUNTS.
FIRST, EL CARIBE CARRIED A PAID AD BY A NON-EXISTENT

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OUTFIT CALLING ITSELF THE MOVIMIENTO PATRIOTICO NACIONAL.
OTHERWISE UNSIGNED, THE AD CALLED FOR BALAGUER SIMPLY TO
IGNORE THE MAY 16 ELECTION AND CONTINUE HIMSELF IN OFFICE
TO REALIZE THE ADMINISTRATION OF HIS "BOYHOOD DREAMS."
THE AD WAS DENOUNCED IN OTHER PAPERS AS A CRUDE ATTEMPT
BY ANONYMOUS GOLPISTAS TO PUT THEIR MAN ABOVE THE LAW.
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THE UPROAR WAS SUCH THAT EVEN THE MOST PROMINENT
REFORMISTA ADVOCATE OF NEW ELECTIONS, VINCHO CASTILLO,
DENOUNCED THE AD AND AN EMBARRASSED CARIBE, IN EFFECT,
APOLOGIZED EDITORIALLY FOR HAVING PUBLISHED IT.

10. THE SECOND TRICK, DENOUNCED AS PROMPTLY AS IT WAS
LAUNCHED, WAS AN EFFORT IN THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES TO
INTRODUCE LEGISLATION THAT WOULD SIMPLY AND UNCEREMONIOUSLY
EXTEND BALAGUER'S TERM, WHICH ENDS AUGUST 16, BY TWO MORE
YEARS. THE FOUR AUTHORS OF THIS SCHEME IMMEDIATELY
FOUND THEMSELVES HOUNDED BY THE MEDIA AND, AFTER
DISCOVERY OF THE EFFORT BY EL NACIONAL, WERE FINALLY DISAVOWED
BY THEIR LESS VENTURESOME REFORMISTA COLLEAGUES.

11. SENATOR SOCRATES PICHARDO (CHINO), APPARENTLY
UNFAZED BY US ATTITUDES WHICH HE GOT FIRSTHAND IN
WASHINGTON, IS COMPLETING AN EFFORT TO COLLECT 300,000
VOTER REGISTRATION CARDS FROM PEOPLE AROUND THE
COJNTRY WHO SAID THEY WERE UNABLE TO VOTE MAY 16. WHAT THIS
WOULD PROVE IS UNCLEAR, SINCE IT IS UNIVERSALLY
ACCEPTED THAT UPWARDS OF 600,000 REGISTERED VOTERS DID
NOT VOTE. IT APPEARS TO BE ANOTHER DILATORY TACTIC TO KEEP THE JCE
TIED UP EVEN LONGER.

12. MEANWHILE, THE THEME OF A COMMUNIST-ORIENTED PRD
GOVERNMENT BEING AGITATED BY CHINO IS SECONDED BY RAFAEL
BONILLA AYBAR, WHO HELPED FOMENT THE ANTI-COMMUNIST
WAVE OF FEELING THAT DROVE JUAN BOSCH FROM OFFICE 15
YEARS AGO. BONILLA APPEARS DAILY ON TELEVISION, A
COST-FREE COURTESY OF THE GOVERNMENT'S NATIONAL
NETWORK, WITH STARK WARNINGS OF A COMMUNIST FUTURE FOR
THE NATION.

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13. WE EXPECT THE SORT OF THINGS DESCRIBED ABOVE TO
CONTINUE AS LONG AS THE JCE FIDDLES. PRESIDENT BALAGUER
HAS NOT SPOKEN PUBLICLY ABOUT THE ELECTION SINCE MAY

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18, AND THE BOARD HAS GIVEN NO INDICATION OF WHAT ITS
DECISION WILL BE.
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